

NORTHEAST VALLEY COALITION AGAINST METHAMPHETAMINE

Coalition Meeting Summary November 16, 2006

I. Welcome & Opening Remarks

Brent Stockwell welcomed participants and thanked them for attending. Participants introduced themselves and the organization they represented. Brent gave an overview of the coalition and its purpose. The current focus is to complete the needs assessment by the end of the year.

II. Presentation By Tom Ellis, Croft Workplace Drug Programs

Tom Ellis presented information about the effects of drug use in the workplace. Seventy percent of drug users 18 to 49 years old are employed fulltime. It is estimated that 8-15% of all employees use drugs. In 1987, the Conrail accident left 16 people dead, 174 injured and cost \$16.5 million. Both rail operators were under the influence of marijuana. The accident brought the forefront the issue of workplace safety.

Drug using employees have three times more medical claims than non-users and are absent or late 10-16 times more often. Workplace drug use is estimated to result in \$80 billion in lost productivity. It costs employers \$14,000 per year per user.

Employers need a clearly defined substance abuse policy and a program that includes prevention, identification and denial, and enforcement of treatment. Drug testing may include pre-employment, random, post-accident testing, reasonable suspicion, mandatory follow-up, and general testing. Employers must be aware of chain of custody issues when testing. Random testing uses a computer draw to protect against bias and is unannounced. Mandatory follow up is important to help with employee retention. More movement is needed in this direction to keep employees who use in an EAP program.

It is also important to integrate education and prevention in the workplace, especially the impacts on the community. Eighty-five percent of employees surveyed favored drug testing. Education should include what to look for, signs and symptoms in the home, family and community.

Another important strategy is to integrate enforcement and treatment retention. To combat retention deficit disorder, a treatment program must include both positive and negative consequences. Even though 8-15% of the labor force has a substance abuse problem, less than 1% is in treatment. Studies have shown that for every dollar invested in an EAP, the employer saves \$5-\$16. The average annual cost of EAP is \$12-\$20 per employee.

It is important for employers to understand that a substance abuse program is not a drug testing plan. It goes beyond testing. The more companies that get involved set an example for others to follow.

The largest numbers of businesses are small businesses and are most likely to not have a comprehensive program due to the cost. Croft Consulting tries to connect small businesses with various providers and encourages them to at least look at pre-employment testing, random testing and education. In the Phoenix metro area, in excess of 85% of companies who employ 50 people or more have some kind of testing, but do not have a program. Generally this means pre-employment testing. Most do not do random testing.

III. Coalition Announcements

Brent Stockwell announced that the State has chosen a new technical assistance provider, Pima Prevention, to work with the coalition. They will also be working with the underage drinking coalitions. Pima Prevention will be hosting strategic planning training in December and an anti-meth coalition planning session in January. Members of the steering committee will attend both of these sessions.

Sergeant Jarvis Qumyintewa, Fort McDowell Police gave highlights of the Tribal Anti-Meth Conference he attended. The conference covered the effects of meth on the community and presented the matrix model for treatment. Native communities are active in their traditional ways. Programs such as matrix must be adapted to incorporate traditional ways to be effective in Native American communities. Other presenters spoke about the impacts of meth on the environment, and enforcement strategies. For example, some tribal law enforcement departments have State, Federal and Tribal certifications, which gives them arrest powers off of the reservation. Another strategy involves tribal housing. SRPMIC Housing has a one strike policy. If a resident of tribal housing uses, abuses, or possesses drugs, he/she can lose their housing. Fort McDowell does not have a one strike policy, but a resident can be removed with Council approval.

Diane McMillan gave an update on the work of the Resource Subcommittee. The subcommittee members discussed the format for collecting and reporting on resources. They discussed that the Coalition was not really “endorsing” these resources, but that we need to know that these are credible resources. The group will look at how long a resource has been available, what the accomplishments of the resource agency are, and what services are offered.

Leslie Reeves gave an update on the work of the Needs Assessment subcommittee. The subcommittee is collecting data from a variety of sources to document the crime and child abuse trends related to meth. A crime analyst from the Scottsdale Police Department met with the subcommittee to discuss possible sources of information.

IV. Coalition Business

Two new members were approved to serve on the Coalition Steering Committee:

Kate Zanon, Town of Fountain Hills
Jarvis Qumyintewa, Fort McDowell

V. Subcommittee Action Plans

The coalition convened two subcommittees: the resources subcommittee and the needs assessment subcommittee. Brent Stockwell met with the Resources Subcommittee and Karen Kurtz met with the Needs Assessment Subcommittee. Minutes for both of these meetings will be posted on the coalition website.

Upcoming Meetings:

8 a.m. – 9 a.m., Thursday, December 14, Coalition Steering Committee
9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m., Thursday, December 14, Full Coalition Meeting
10:30 a.m. – noon, Thursday, December 14, Subcommittee Meetings

Pauite Neighborhood Center, 6535 East Osborn